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THE FUTURE-READY TRIAD: EXPLORING THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF PERCEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, WORKFORCE AGILITY AND EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AMONG PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN INDIA.

The dissertation is submitted for the partial fulfilment for the degree of M.SC IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (SPECIALISATION IN ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND MANAGEMENT PSYCHOLOGY)

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Declaration

I, Sristi Ganguly, pursuing a Master's from Sister Nivedita University, Department of Applied Psychology hereby, declare that the research work titled "The Future-Ready Triad: Exploring the interconnectedness of perceived psychological safety, workforce agility and employee resilience among private sector employees in India" has been completed with full honesty and integrity. I confirm that this study is an original piece of research, and all sources of information have been appropriately acknowledged and cited. Furthermore, I found that the research work has undergone through plagiarism check to ensure its authenticity. I take full responsibility for the content, findings and interpretations presented in the research and the dissertation from it.

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PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE

"I, Sristi Ganguly, hereby declare that the research work titled, "The Future-Ready Triad: Exploring the interconnectedness of perceived psychological safety, workforce agility and employee resilience among private sector employees in India", conducted by me, has been completed with full honesty and integrity. I confirm that the work is original, and all sources of information have been appropriately acknowledged and cited. Furthermore, I affirm that the research work has undergone thorough plagiarism checks to ensure its authenticity."

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "The Future-Ready Triad: Exploring the interconnectedness of perceived psychological safety, workforce agility and employee resilience among private sector employees in India" being submitted by Sristi Ganguly to Sister Nivedita University, Newtown in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master in Science in Applied Psychology is an authentic record of research work carried out by her on my supervision and guidance. This dissertation has reached the standard of fulfilling the requirements of the regulations relating to the nature of the degree. This is an original study done by the candidate and has not been submitted by her before in any form for any other degree of this University or any other University.

Date: 30/4/2025

Place: Kolkata

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Abstract

In an era marked by volatility and technological disruption, the World Economic Forum (*The Future of Jobs Report 2025*, 2025) identifies resilience and agility as core skills for the future workforce. This study investigates the relationships between perceived psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience among private sector employees in India. Psychological safety is the shared belief that it is safe to engage in interpersonal risk-taking in the workplace. Workforce agility is the ability to efficiently respond or continuously adapt to changes in the context of work. Employee resilience refers to the dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity in the workplace. Data was collected from a sample of 61 private sector employees in India. Using correlational analysis, results revealed a significant negative correlation between psychological safety and agility, suggesting that high agility demands may initially undermine safety. However, psychological safety positively correlated with resilience, as did agility and resilience. Experience emerged as a key moderator: early-career employees struggled to reconcile agility with safety, while seasoned professionals harmonised all three constructs. The findings shed light on the need for organisations to foster psychologically safe environments that balance adaptive demands with employee well-being, offering actionable insights for Human Resource practices and leadership development in dynamic economies.

Keywords: Psychological safety, workforce agility, employee resilience, future-ready skills, India.

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Introduction

In the latest Future of Jobs Report (*The Future of Jobs Report 2025*, 2025), the World Economic Forum declares resilience and agility as some of the "core skills of 2025" and "skills of increasing use by 2030". With the rising demand for skills that entail risk-taking abilities, particularly in the challenging employment landscape of India, psychological safety emerges as a potential key factor that may be tied to a thriving workforce. The present study, therefore, investigates the relationship between perceived psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience among private sector employees in India.

Psychological safety has been described as a shared belief amongst individuals as to whether it is safe to engage in interpersonal risk-taking in the workplace (A. Edmondson, 1999). It is the sense of safety and confidence that allows individuals to take risks, voice their thoughts and concerns, ask questions, and admit mistakes – all without the fear of facing backlash or negative repercussions. In the words of Edmondson, "it's felt permission for candor." (Gallo, 2023). It is more than just a desirable organisational trait—it is a critical prerequisite for collective learning, adaptability, and innovation. Edmondson argues that when individuals withhold their thoughts, they inadvertently deprive the team of moments of insight, feedback, and growth, ultimately stifling creativity and weakening decision-making (McCausland, 2023). At its core, psychological safety nurtures intellectual exchange and facilitates continuous learning. In an age where both individual and organisational success hinges on innovation and agility, such an environment is not only beneficial, but also essential.

Yet, this critical concept is often misunderstood. A common misinterpretation conflates psychological safety with the notion of a "safe space." Edmondson (Amy Edmondson [@AmyCEdmondson], 2022) clarifies that the two are not synonymous. While safe spaces aim to provide comfort and emotional healing, psychological safety is about permitting challenge and dissent in the service of learning and performance. Guinea (2022) further distinguishes between the two by arguing that while psychological safety enables voicing diverse thoughts and opinions, a safe space is more oriented towards care and support. The interpersonal dynamics in psychologically safe environments allow for discomfort and disruption as necessary features of progress. Thus, to view psychological safety merely as emotional insulation is to undermine its

transformative potential – it is not about shielding people from difficulty, but about empowering them to face it collectively.

Researchers have elucidated on the development and influences of psychological safety through several theoretical frameworks. One of the most widely used is Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which posits that individuals learn appropriate behaviours by observing others in their environment. Thus, the hallmark of a psychologically safe team is leadership that models open communication and encourages risk-taking, demonstrating to employees that it is acceptable to speak up and admit mistakes (S. Liu et al., 2014; Newman et al., 2017).

The Social Exchange Theory adds that psychological safety is fostered through reciprocal relationships. When leaders or organisations provide support, employees are more likely to respond with commitment, speak up, and cooperate with their teams (Chen et al., 2014; De Clercq & Rius, 2007).

Alternatively, the Social Identity Theory argues that inclusivity and organisational support increase the employees' propensity to identify with the organisation, resulting in higher psychological safety (Singh et al., 2013).

The Status Characteristics Theory adds the dimension of perceived status, pointing out that individuals with higher perceived status within a team usually feel more comfortable and empowered to contribute, but those with lower perceived status tend to feel less secure (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Beyond these interpersonal theories, Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) views psychological safety as a resource that protects individuals from stress and allows them to invest energy in learning and innovation.

Finally, according to the Trait Activation Theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000), psychological safety can act as a situational cue that activates personality traits like proactivity or learning orientation, which results in behaviours such as information sharing and problem-solving (Byrne et al., 2005).

While it is evident that there is an abundance of theoretical discourse regarding psychological safety, the overwhelming majority of workplaces still await its practical implementation.

Workforce agility is widely understood as the ability to efficiently respond or continuously adapt to changes (Hammouri et al., 2023).

However, the research on workforce agility is still emerging, and researchers have not been able to arrive at a consensus regarding the definition and measurement of this concept yet. Braun et al. (2017) described it as "the skill to proactively create opportunities or overcome obstacles by rethinking or redefining typical approaches. Agility involves monitoring the current environment to anticipate change and responding in a timely and effective way when changing circumstances require it". According to Kidd (1994), workforce agility is the ability to properly respond to change in a timely manner and to tap into the benefits of change. Zhang & Sharifi (2000) build on this understanding, defining agile workers as having a broad vision and being capable of taking advantage of turbulent marketplace conditions, such as shifting customer preferences. From the perspective of attitude, Plonka (1997) noted that agile workers are inclined towards learning and self-development, good problem-solvers, comfortable with change and new concepts and technologies, able to come up with innovative ideas, and always prepared to take on new responsibilities. In terms of behaviour, Dyer & Shafer (2003) defined workforce agility in terms of being proactive, adaptive, and generative. Additionally, Sherehiy & Karwowski (2014) grouped the behavior of agile workforce into the following three dimensions:

Proactive behaviour, meaning, identifying potential problems early, taking initiative to solve them, and continuously improving work processes.

Adaptive behaviour, involving being flexible at work, switching roles easily, handling multiple responsibilities, and collaborating across different teams as needed.

Resilient behaviour, which staying positive about changes, new ideas, and technologies; handling uncertainty, differing opinions, and unexpected situations calmly; and managing stress effectively.

Thus, Alahyari et al. (2019) rightly concluded that agility enables faster innovation, continuous improvement, and collaborative problem-solving.

A vast collection of theories enriches the knowledge of this concept. Alviani et al. (2024) derived four broad theoretical categories used to study workforce agility, after analysing over 25

fundamental theories. These categories encapsulate the different perspectives contributing to the understanding of agility in the workplace.

The first category, named Organisational and Management Theory, focuses on how organisational structures, management practices, and psychological factors shape workforce agility. Here, the Self-Determination Theory explains how autonomy, competence, and relatedness drive agility, influencing innovation, job satisfaction, and well-being. The Dynamic Capability Theory examines how agility is shaped by internal factors (skills, culture) and external factors (market resources). The Resource-Based Theory views agility as a strategic resource for competitive advantage, while the Job Demand-Resource Theory links agility to balancing work demands and available resources.

The second category is called the Communication and Social Interaction Theory. It focuses on the role of communication, technology, and social dynamics in fostering agility. As part of this category, the Information Processing Theory explains how IT skills, digital tools, and communication visibility impact agility. The Social Exchange Theory highlights trust and reciprocity in agile teams. The Relational Capital Theory focuses on networking and collaboration.

Next, the category Behaviour and Learning Theory is based on the way individual behaviours, cognitive processes, and learning drive agility. Under this umbrella, the Planned Behaviour Theory examines how attitudes and intentions shape agile actions. The Social Cognitive Theory emphasises observational learning and self-efficacy. The Spillover Theory explores how agility in one area influences others.

Finally, the Economic Theory highlights the financial and strategic value of workforce agility. Here, the Pricing Theory is a significant lens which links workforce agility to organisational agility and competitive pricing.

Diverse perspectives like these continue to broaden the dimensions of workforce agility, taking strides towards a comprehensive understanding and consensus surrounding this concept.

In the context of resilience in the workplace, Hartmann et al. (2020) define resilience as a “dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity”.

Masten (2001) established that resilience encompasses two elements – the experience of adversity and positive adaptation. Be it in the form of high-intensity circumstances, like a crisis at work, or low-intensity but high-frequency or high-duration circumstances, like work stress (Fisher et al., 2019), the experience of adversity both challenges and threatens an entity's performance and well-being (Richardson, 2002). The process through which the entity recovers its original state of well-being or performance, or even surpasses it, is called positive adaptation (Britt et al., 2016; Luthar et al., 2000).

Researchers have characterised individual resilience through three primary lenses: as a stable personality trait, a malleable state-like capacity, and a dynamic process (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016; Richardson, 2002). The trait perspective conceptualises resilience as a discrete and stable personal characteristic or a group of different personal strengths (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Individuals who have resilience are found to be better at tackling adversities and setbacks than those who do not (Shin et al., 2012). However, the capacity perspective, which understands resilience as a state-like attribute, implies that it can also be developed over time with training (Luthans, 2002). The process perspective goes a step further, referring to resilience as a dynamic progression that develops in response to various situational factors, ultimately leading to positive adaptation (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013; Moenkemeyer et al., 2012). From a process perspective, resilience may stem from the influence of resilience mechanisms and resilience-promoting factors. Fisher et al. (2019) define resilience mechanisms as the experiences, reactions, and behaviours individuals employ when facing adversity, including coping strategies and emotional responses. Resilience-promoting factors, in contrast, are personal or environmental characteristics, such as the trait of hardiness, that exist independently of adversity but mitigate its negative effects or enhance resilience mechanisms during challenging times. Thus, Hartmann et al. (2020) sum up that resilience is a dynamic process comprising four key elements: the experience of adversity, the activation of resilience mechanisms, the influence of resilience-promoting factors, and the resulting resilience outcomes.

Employee resilience has been explored through multiple theoretical frameworks. Integrated resource theories, such as the job demands-resources theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) frame resilience as a personal resource that individuals draw upon to maintain psychological well-being. These theories suggest that

resilience may buffer against the negative effects of workplace demands, as demonstrated in studies by De Clercq & Belausteguigoitia (2017), Martinez-Corts et al. (2015), and Gabriel et al. (2011). Conservation of resources theory further distinguishes between loss-oriented resources that prevent depletion and gain-oriented resources that facilitate resource accumulation (Hobfoll, 1989). Pioneering work by Meneghel et al. (2016) and Shin et al. (2012) aligns with this perspective, showing how resilience enables individuals to acquire additional resources from their environment.

The trait-activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000) offers another valuable framework, particularly for understanding how situational factors influence resilience outcomes. This theory posits that personality traits, including resilience, are expressed in response to trait-relevant situational cues. Organisational and team contexts, such as psychologically safe environments or teams characterised by collective humility, may amplify resilience by providing supportive conditions for its expression. For example, such environments can equip employees with emotional or informational support to navigate adversity effectively.

The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) views resilience as a dynamic, developable process shaped by reciprocal interactions between behaviour, personal factors, and environmental influences. This perspective highlights how resilience evolves through experiences, such as successfully overcoming adversity, which can enhance self-efficacy and foster positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). However, as noted by Luthans et al. (2007), failure to cope with adversity may trigger a downward spiral, undermining future resilience. This underscores the importance of examining resilience as a temporally sensitive and context-dependent process.

Finally, the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001) explains how positive emotions expand cognitive and behavioural repertoires, enabling individuals to build enduring psychological resources. While this theory has been applied sparingly in workplace resilience research (Meneghel et al., 2016; Sommer et al., 2016), its multilevel applicability makes it promising for understanding how individual resilience contributes to team resilience. Empirical evidence, such as van Hooff & de Pater's (2017) findings on stress recovery, supports its relevance to work contexts.

All these theoretical bases create a vast network of knowledge, painting a clearer picture of resilience in organisational settings.

Literature Review

In my journey of transitioning from being a university student of Applied Psychology to taking on the role of a Human Resource intern, the sharp contrast between the two environments immediately stood out to me. In my professional life, I observed the need to tackle a myriad of tasks simultaneously within a limited span of time, across different teams, using a diverse set of skills, every single day. I noticed how often my coworkers and I strived to be adaptive yet consistent, creative yet analytical, team-oriented, and communicative. This interested me to find out more about the shared factors that bind these skills and abilities together. Thus, I decided to investigate the relationships between perceived psychological safety, workforce agility and employee resilience, in my research.

Contemporary organisational success increasingly calls for workforces capable of navigating volatility, complexity, and technological disruption. This adaptive capacity is reflected in three interdependent constructs: psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience.

Psychological safety, which is the shared belief that interpersonal risks like questioning norms or admitting errors won't be punished (A. Edmondson, 1999) has emerged as a critical enabler of team performance and innovation.

The empirical findings of Google's landmark Project Aristotle is a great example of this. Initiated in 2012 to understand what makes some teams thrive while others falter, the study analysed hundreds of teams before concluding that psychological safety was the single most important factor contributing to team effectiveness. The implication was clear: "even the extremely smart, high-powered employees at Google needed a psychologically safe work environment to contribute the talents they had to offer" (Poyton, 2024). As documented by Duhigg (Duhigg, 2016), team members who felt free to express themselves, especially during emotionally charged, ambiguous, or conflict-prone discussions, demonstrated higher collaboration, mutual respect, and engagement. Such outcomes affirm that psychological safety is not about politeness or consensus, but about creating space for authenticity and emotional risk-

taking. It sheds light on the paradox of high-functioning teams: they are not always harmonious, but they strategically allow for friction that can lead to growth.

The value of psychological safety is further highlighted by research in high-performance environments such as Research and Development and cross-cultural agile teams. Liu & Keller (2021), in their study of Taiwanese Research and Development teams, found that teams with higher psychological safety were more likely to engage in idea sharing, debate, and sustained innovation. Such teams also experienced lower levels of knowledge loss and disengagement. Psychological safety, in this context, acts as a buffer against intellectual attrition and a catalyst for long-term productivity.

Despite growing awareness, its widespread implementation remains limited. Workhuman's pandemic-era study (*How to Build Psychological Safety*, 2023) revealed that only 26% of workers reported feeling psychologically safe, with women reporting even lower levels than men (Robinson, 2013). The consequences of this phenomenon manifest in burnout, elevated stress levels, and loneliness. Nyo (2024) identifies practices such as micromanagement, silence in meetings, and excessive consensus as warning signs of poor psychological safety. These behavioural patterns suggest a climate where risk-taking is punished and conformity is rewarded. Such conditions are unfavourable for innovation and growth. This bolsters the idea that the deficiency of psychological safety is often invisible until its alarming consequences, such as resignation, stagnation and disengagement, begin to surface.

Thus, psychological safety should be understood not only as a mechanism for performance enhancement, but also as a strategic lever for resilience. Gube & Hennelly (2022) contend that organisations that embed psychological safety into their core values and operational strategies are better positioned to weather disruption and uncertainty. Leaders who model candid communication and inclusive decision-making foster a culture of integrity, agility, and collective responsibility. In such organisations, resilience is not merely the capacity to endure challenges, but the ability to learn, adapt, and grow from them. Thus, when applied correctly, psychological safety becomes a cornerstone of strategic advantage, strengthening both resilience and agility.

However, studies on the individual level of psychology are sparse at present. Due to the strong psychometric properties of *Edmondson's Psychological Safety Scale* (1997), Newman et al.

(2017) suggest that it is isomorphic, or similar in meaning at different levels. Several studies have adapted this scale to examine the individually-held perceptions of psychological safety within organisations, by replacing the term "team" with "organisation" in the scale items (Carmeli et al., 2009, 2010; Carmeli & Gittell, 2009; Carmeli & Zisu, 2009; Chen et al., 2014; Kark & Carmeli, 2009; Madjar & Ortiz-Walters, 2009). The present study measures the perceived psychological safety of individuals in the same manner.

The transition to Industry 5.0 calls for a shift from rigid, hierarchical management structures towards more dynamic and adaptive organisational processes, as traditional models often stifle innovation (Hammouri et al., 2023; Sherehiy & Karwowski, 2014). At the heart of this transformation lies workforce agility, or the capacity of employees to adapt, respond, and flourish amid rapid change.

Workforce agility is pivotal for fostering innovation, continuous improvement, and collaborative problem-solving (Alahyari et al., 2019). Scholars have identified several factors influencing agility, including workplace spirituality, training and development opportunities, psychological empowerment, communication quality, and strong networking ties (Muduli, 2017; Pitafi et al., 2019; Srivastava & Gupta, 2022). Conative antecedents illuminate the personal drivers of agility, including job-related curiosity, self-efficacy, learning from past mistakes, anticipation and planning, active listening, risk-taking, trust, and tolerance for ambiguity (Storme et al., 2020). These traits underscore the psychological and behavioural dimensions that enable employees to navigate uncertainty and thrive in evolving work environments.

However, the concept remains inconsistently defined, with some researchers equating it with multitasking ability (Sumukadas & Sawhney, 2004), while others emphasise adaptability, proactivity, and resilience (Alavi et al., 2014) or highlight traits like collaboration, openness, and intelligence (Braun et al., 2017; Herlina et al., 2021). Despite its recognised importance, workforce agility research faces significant gaps. Conceptual ambiguity persists due to overlaps with related constructs such as proactive behaviour and openness to experience. The field also suffers from theoretical underdevelopment, with calls for more robust frameworks (Post et al., 2020; Salmen & and Festing, 2022). A unified model is lacking, though recent work identifies over 16 potential drivers (Menon & Suresh, 2022). The role of leadership in cultivating agility remains underexplored (Tessarini Junior & Saltorato, 2021) as do critical factors including

workplace spirituality, adaptive performance, learning agility, and resilience (Park & Park, 2021; Paul et al., 2020). The present study aims to add to the deeper understanding of this construct by investigating its relationship with the underexplored pillars, namely, resilience (Reinhold, 2024) and psychological safety.

As for what builds resilience, scholars identify five primary categories of factors that contribute to the development of individual resilience in organisational settings. First, personality traits and cultural value orientations play a significant role. Empirical studies demonstrate that traits such as conscientiousness, emotional stability, and future orientation positively correlate with resilience (Lyons et al., 2015; Wei & Taormina, 2014). Additionally, cultural values emphasising collectivism and interpersonal relationships appear to provide greater protection against workplace stressors compared to individualistic orientations (Wei & Taormina, 2014; Welbourne et al., 2015).

Second, personal resources constitute another critical dimension. Competence-related factors, including job expertise and self-efficacy, along with emotional regulation capabilities such as emotional intelligence, enhance an individual's capacity to navigate workplace challenges (Cameron & Brownie, 2010; Guo et al., 2017; Kinman & Grant, 2011). Furthermore, the availability of social support and the quality of work relationships significantly contribute to resilience development (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Stephens et al., 2013).

Third, personal attitudes and mindsets influence resilience. Research indicates that finding purpose and meaning in one's work, as well as maintaining an optimistic outlook, serve as protective factors during adversity (Cameron & Brownie, 2010; Corner et al., 2017). A proactive orientation toward learning and development similarly emerges as a key characteristic of resilient individuals (Lyons et al., 2015).

Fourth, emotional experiences significantly impact resilience. The broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001) posits that positive emotions expand cognitive and behavioral repertoires, thereby facilitating resilient responses to challenges (Sommer et al., 2016). Conversely, negative emotional experiences, such as interpersonal conflicts, can undermine resilience (Green et al., 2011).

Finally, contextual factors in the work environment shape resilience. Job resources including supervisor support and constructive feedback, combined with manageable work demands, create conditions conducive to resilience (Hobfoll, 1989; Kuntz et al., 2017). Leadership approaches, particularly transformational leadership, and positive team climates further enhance resilience (Meneghel et al., 2014; Sommer et al., 2016).

It is evident that, despite the groundbreaking insights on the constructs themselves, the Indian workforce remains under-represented in the current literature.

Thus, the present study aims to bridge the gaps between our knowledge regarding the interplay of psychological safety, workforce agility and employee resilience – the 'triad' of preparedness for the emerging employment market – among private sector employees in India.

Methodology

Operational definitions of the variables:

Perceived Psychological safety: The belief amongst individuals as to whether it is safe to engage in interpersonal risk-taking in the workplace (A. Edmondson, 1999).

Workforce agility: The ability to efficiently respond or continuously adapt to changes (Hammouri et al., 2023) in the workplace.

Employee resilience: The dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity (Hartmann et al., 2020) in the workplace.

Objectives & Hypotheses:

Objective:

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the relationships between perceived psychological safety, workforce agility and employee resilience among private sector employees in India.

Hypotheses:

The present study investigates the relationships between perceived psychological safety, workforce agility and employee resilience among private sector employees in India. Thus, the null hypotheses are as follows:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between perceived psychological safety and workforce agility among private sector employees in India.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between perceived psychological safety and employee resilience among private sector employees in India.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between workforce agility and employee resilience among private sector employees in India.

Defining the sample; sampling techniques:

The present sample consists of 61 private sector employees in India, with intermediate-level to senior-level work experience.

Inclusion criteria:

- Resident of India
- Employed in the private sector of India
- Having at least 2-3 years or intermediate-level total work experience in their field

Exclusion criteria:

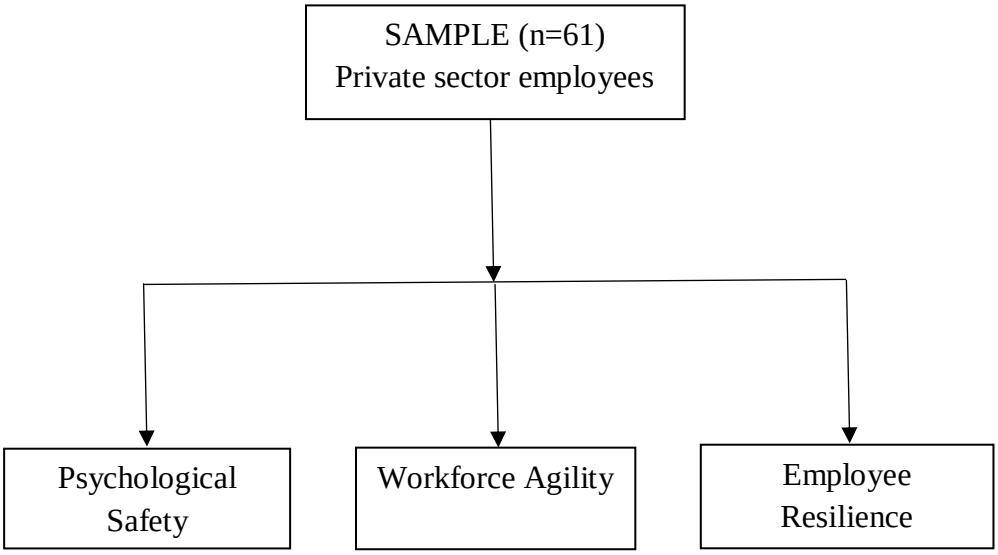
- Not a resident of India
- Not employed in the private sector of India
- Below 2-3 years or intermediate-level total work experience in their field

The sampling techniques used in this study are convenience sampling and snowball sampling.

Research design:

The present study follows a correlational design, as represented below:

Figure 1: Schematic representation of the research design.



Tools used:

1. Psychological Safety Scale: The psychological safety scale was developed by Amy Edmondson (Edmondson, 1999; *Edmondson's Psychological Safety Scale*) to assess the perception of psychological safety within teams and organisations. It is a 7-item questionnaire, with a 7-point Likert scale for each item, where 1 = very inaccurate and 7 = very accurate. Items 1, 3 and 5 are reverse-scored. It has strong psychometric properties with excellent reliability and validity (Newman et al., 2017), and is suitable for measuring psychological safety on an individual level, provided the term 'team' is replaced by 'organisation' in the items. In this study, the scale has been adapted accordingly.
2. Scale developed by Muduli: Muduli's (2017) questionnaire for measuring workforce agility is used here. It contains 7 items, with each of them rated on a 3-point Likert scale, where 1 = low, 2 = medium and 3 = high. The scale has a Cronbach's α of 0.714, indicating sufficient reliability. The content validity was ensured through the comments of several experts from industry and academia and convergent validity was measured through factor analysis, demonstrating a rigorous process for establishing the validity of the scale.
3. Employee Resilience Scale: The Employee Resilience Scale, developed by Näswall et al. (2019) has been used. It contains 9 items on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 = 'Almost never' to 7 = 'Almost always'. The Cronbach's α of this scale is 0.90, indicating strong

reliability. The studies conducted during the development of the test also provide strong evidence for the different forms of validity.

Procedure:

The Psychological Safety Scale, Muduli's scale for workforce agility and the Employee Resilience Scale were administered through a Google form, which was circulated through various social media platforms. The participants were selected according to the inclusion criteria, through convenience sampling and snowball sampling. They were required to provide written consent before responding to the items in the questionnaires. Instructions were provided and additional help was offered. The obtained responses were scored and the relevant statistical analyses were applied to determine the results.

Statistical analysis:

Spearman's rank-order correlation was calculated using the software jamovi 2.4, to find the correlation between the variables. This is because the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the distribution of the variables is not normal, thus warranting the use of non-parametric tests. The mean and standard deviation were also calculated as part of the descriptive statistics.

Result & Discussion:

The statistical analysis of the 61 participants yielded the following results:

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the present dataset.

Descriptives							
	Perceived Psychological Safety		**Workforce Agility**		**Employee Resilience**		
N		61		61		61	
Mean		34.0		17.6		50.4	

Standard deviation		6.44		2.35		7.85	
Shapiro-Wilk W		0.971		0.948		0.949	
Shapiro-Wilk p		0.151		0.011		0.014	

The dataset comprises a sample of 61 participants, with the three variables: perceived psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience.

- The mean score for perceived psychological safety was 34.0, with a standard deviation of 6.44, indicating moderate variability. The scores ranged from 22 to 47.
- Workforce agility had a mean of 17.6 and a relatively low standard deviation of 2.35, suggesting the scores were closely clustered. The values ranged from 12 to 21.
- For employee resilience, the mean was 50.4 and the standard deviation was 7.85, indicating the highest variability among the three variables. The scores ranged between 28 and 63.

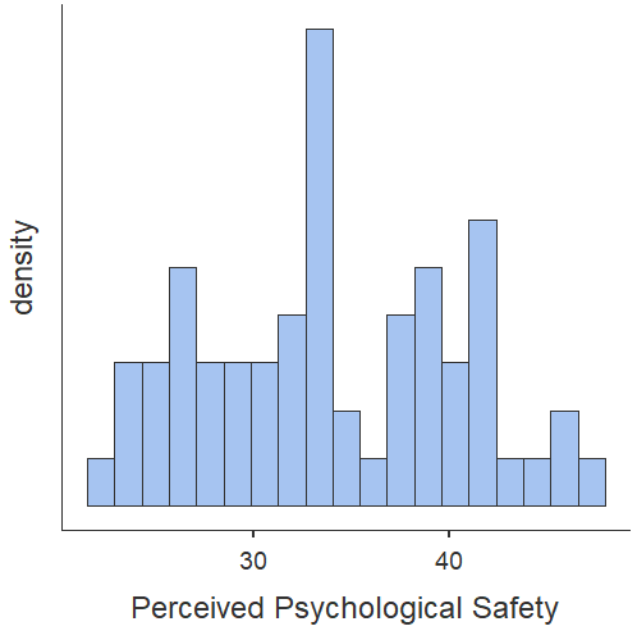
Normality Tests (Shapiro-Wilk):

To assess the normality of the data, the Shapiro-Wilk test was applied:

- Perceived Psychological Safety: $W = 0.971$, $p = 0.151$
- Workforce Agility: $W = 0.948$, $p = 0.011$
- Employee Resilience: $W = 0.949$, $p = 0.014$

The Shapiro-Wilk test indicates that Perceived Psychological Safety does not significantly deviate from normality ($p > 0.05$), whereas Workforce Agility and Employee Resilience show significant deviation from a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$). This justifies the use of non-parametric tests, such as Spearman's rho, in the correlation analysis.

Figure 2: Histogram of Perceived Psychological Safety

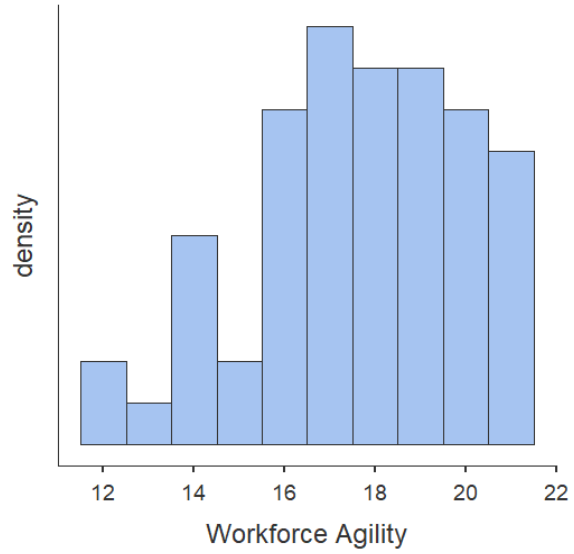


The histogram illustrates the distribution of scores for the variable Perceived Psychological Safety, with values ranging approximately from 22 to 47. The distribution appears to be relatively uniform with multiple peaks, though a slight central tendency is noticeable.

A notable peak occurs around the score of 34, suggesting a larger number of participants scored within this range. The distribution also shows minor peaks at scores in the ranges of 27–28 and 40–42, indicating secondary concentrations of participants' scores.

Overall, the distribution is fairly spread out and does not show strong skewness, although the presence of multiple local peaks reflects variability in responses. This suggests that participants' perceptions of psychological safety varied broadly, with moderate clustering around mid-range values.

Figure 3: Histogram of Workforce Agility

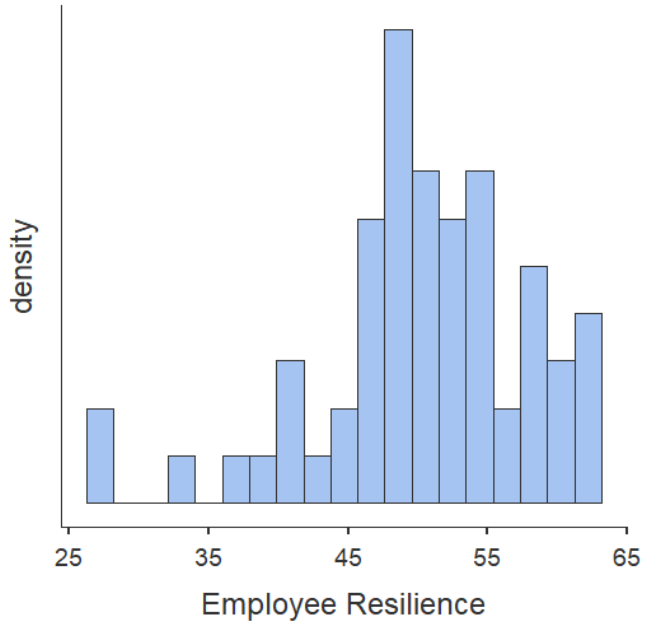


The histogram illustrates the distribution of scores for the variable Workforce Agility, with values ranging approximately from 12 to 22. The distribution appears to be slightly negatively skewed, with a greater concentration of scores toward the higher end of the scale.

A prominent peak is visible between the scores of 17 and 18, suggesting that a majority of participants scored within this range. The distribution is fairly symmetrical but shows a mild tail toward the lower values (e.g., around 12–14), indicating that fewer participants scored at the lower end.

Overall, the scores are moderately concentrated in the upper middle range, suggesting that most participants reported higher levels on this variable.

Figure 4: Histogram of Employee Resilience



The histogram represents the distribution of scores for the variable Employee Resilience, spanning a range from approximately 26 to 64. The shape of the distribution appears to be slightly positively skewed, with most scores clustered around the mid-to-upper 40s and 50s.

There is a notable peak near the score of 50, indicating that a large portion of participants scored around this value. The spread is moderately wide, suggesting variability in responses, but without extreme outliers. The frequency of lower scores gradually tapers off toward the left, while the right tail remains short.

Overall, the distribution of Employee Resilience scores suggests that most participants scored within the mid-to-high range, with a slight skew toward the higher end.

Table 2: Correlation between Perceived Psychological Safety and Workforce Agility.

Correlation Matrix			
		Perceived Psychological Safety	**Workforce Agility**

Perceived Psychological Safety		Spearman's rho		—		
		df		—		
		p-value		—		
Workforce Agility		Spearman's rho		-0.259		—
		df		59		—
		p-value		0.044		—

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was carried out to assess the relationship between Perceived Psychological Safety and Workforce Agility. The results showed a negative correlation between the two variables,

$\rho = -0.259$, $p = 0.044$, with a sample size of $n = 61$.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the correlation is statistically significant, suggesting that as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease slightly.

Hence, H_{01} is rejected.

Table 3: Correlation between Perceived Psychological Safety and Employee Resilience.

Correlation Matrix			
		Perceived Psychological Safety	**Employee Resilience**

Perceived Psychological Safety		Spearman's rho		—			
		df		—			
		p-value		—			
Employee Resilience		Spearman's rho		0.261		—	
		df		59		—	
		p-value		0.042		—	

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to assess the relationship between Perceived Psychological Safety and Employee Resilience. The results indicated a positive but weak correlation between the two variables,
$\rho=0.26$, $p=0.042$, with a sample size of $n=61$.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the correlation is statistically significant, suggesting that increases in one variable are associated with slight increases in the other.

Hence, H_{02} is rejected.

Table 4: Correlation between Workforce Agility and Employee Resilience

Correlation Matrix							
			Workforce Agility		**Employee Resilience**		
Workforce Agility		Spearman's rho		—			
		df		—			

	p-value	—				
Employee Resilience	Spearman's rho	0.287		—		
	df	59		—		
	p-value	0.025		—		

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was performed to examine the relationship between Workforce Agility and Employee Resilience. The analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation,

$\rho=0.287$, $p=0.025$, with $n=61$.

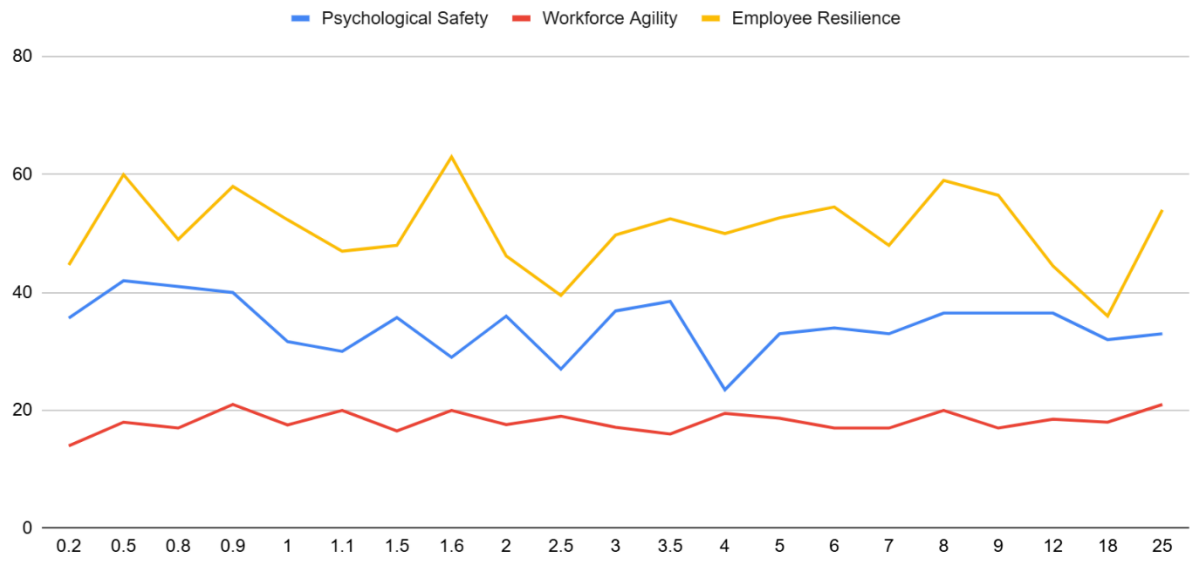
As the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant, indicating that higher scores in one variable are moderately associated with higher scores in the other.

Hence, H_{03} is rejected.

The current findings reveal that the three variables are indeed significantly related to one another. Interestingly, while Perceived Psychological Safety and Employee Resilience, and Workforce Agility and Employee Resilience are positively correlated, Perceived Psychological Safety and Workforce Agility are negatively correlated.

To explore the dynamics further, the scores of the variables were compared across the different experience groups to find out whether the level of experience played a role in such an outcome.

Figure 5: Graphical distribution of the three variables (Y-axis) against the participants' number of years of experience in the current organisation (X-axis)



The graphical distribution reveals the influence of experience, as it shows that the trends of Perceived Psychological Safety and Workforce Agility are not in unison for those who are relatively newer in their current organisation (approximately upto 7 years), while Perceived Psychological Safety and Employee Resilience are, along with and Employee Resilience and Workforce Agility. However, after the 7-year mark, the trends of all three variables fall into tandem.

A possible explanation for this pattern is that, when employees are relatively new or at an intermediate level in their organisation, they might experience a steeper learning curve while trying to adapt to their work environment. Consequently, they might perceive the environment that demands high agility to be less psychologically safe, i.e., if they are required to adapt to newer or frequently-changing circumstances to a great extent, they might find it difficult to show up as their authentic selves. At the same time, their resilience is closely tied to their perception of psychological safety, highlighting that, in the earlier stages, psychological safety may have a crucial influence on the employees' resilience. However, the latter group of individuals demonstrate that with experience, employees can learn to balance psychological safety and agility simultaneously, along with maintaining concurrent levels of resilience.

The current findings contribute to the growing body of literature on psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience while addressing critical gaps in the context of India's private sector.

The negative correlation between psychological safety and workforce agility contrasts with existing literature that generally posits a positive relationship between these factors. Prior research, such as Edmondson's foundational work (A. Edmondson, 1999), suggests that psychological safety enables risk-taking and adaptability, thereby fostering agility (Amy Edmondson [@AmyCEdmondson], 2022; A. C. Edmondson, 2018). However, the current findings indicate that in certain contexts, particularly for employees with relatively less experience in India's dynamic private sector, the pressure to be agile may actually undermine the perception of psychological safety. This divergence may be explained by the Dynamic Capability Theory, which recognises internal factors, such as culture, and external factors, such as market resources, to influence agility (Alviani et al., 2024). Moreover, the Job Demand-Resource Theory further elucidates the agility-psychological safety gap, by highlighting how agility is associated with balancing work demands and available resources. In the present findings, agility could be shaped by cultural and organisational factors unique to the Indian context, where rapid changes and high performance expectations could create environments where employees perceive agility demands as threats rather than opportunities.

On the other hand, the positive correlation between psychological safety and employee resilience suggests that psychological safety is a critical resource that helps employees navigate adversity, reinforcing the idea that workplaces fostering open communication and trust enable individuals to recover from challenges more effectively (Gube & Hennelly, 2022). This finding is also consistent with the outcomes from Google's Project Aristotle, which highlighted psychological safety as a cornerstone of high-performing, resilient teams (Poyton, 2024). However, the current study extends this understanding by examining individual perceptions of psychological safety, whereas much of the existing research focuses on team-level dynamics. This shift to the individual level, as suggested by Carmeli et al. (2009), provides a more nuanced understanding of how employees experience these constructs in their daily work lives.

The relationship between workforce agility and employee resilience also offers important insights. The positive correlation between these variables supports Reinhold's (2024) claim that

resilience is one of the pillars of workforce agility. Employees who demonstrate resilience are better equipped to handle the uncertainties and rapid changes associated with agile work environments. However, the moderate strength of this relationship suggests that resilience alone is not sufficient to sustain agility; supportive organisational structures, such as leadership and training, are equally critical. This echoes Muduli's (2017) statement that agility thrives in environments where organisational practices help employees feel empowered and equipped to adapt.

A notable contribution of this study is its exploration of how experience moderates the relationships among perceived psychological safety, agility, and resilience. The findings reveal that the less experienced employees often struggle to reconcile agility demands with psychological safety, perceiving rapid changes as threats to their sense of stability and authenticity. In contrast, the more seasoned employees appear to develop strategies for balancing these demands, aligning with Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that repeated exposure to challenges, along with the accumulation of experiences, builds self-efficacy and adaptive skills. This experiential divide highlights the need for targeted interventions to support early-career professionals as they navigate the complexities of agile work environments.

Despite these contributions, the study has certain limitations. First, the relatively small sample size and reliance on convenience sampling may limit the generalisability of the findings. Second, the unequal number of newer and more experienced individuals results in uneven comparison, weakening the statistical findings. Future research could address this by employing larger, more diverse samples and longitudinal designs to track how these relationships evolve over time. Additionally, qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide deeper insights into the mechanisms underlying these dynamics, particularly in culturally specific contexts like India.

In summary, this study advances the literature by examining the interplay of perceived psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience in India's private sector, which is an underexplored context in existing research. The findings highlight the importance of considering cultural and experiential factors when designing workplace interventions and call for further research to explore these dynamics in diverse settings. By bridging gaps in both theory and practice, this study provides a foundation for future investigations into how organisations

can foster environments that are both agile and psychologically safe, ultimately enhancing employee resilience and sustained organisational success into the years to come.

Conclusion and Implications of the research

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the interconnected dynamics of perceived psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience within India's private sector. The results demonstrate that these three constructs are significantly interrelated, yet their relationships are nuanced and influenced by employees' level of experience. The negative correlation between psychological safety and workforce agility suggests that, particularly for early-career professionals, the pressure to adapt quickly may come at the cost of feeling psychologically safe and communicating authentically in the workplace. This finding challenges the assumption that agility and psychological safety always reinforce one another, highlighting instead that under certain circumstances, they may initially appear to be at odds. However, the positive correlations between psychological safety and resilience, as well as between agility and resilience, indicate that resilience serves as the common ground that helps employees navigate the tensions between psychological safety and agility.

The moderating role of experience emerged as a key factor in reconciling these relationships. Employees with greater tenure appeared better-equipped to balance psychological safety with agility demands, suggesting that over time, individuals develop strategies to maintain their sense of security while remaining adaptable. For newer employees, however, the steep learning curve associated with agility may create a perceived trade-off between adapting to change and feeling safe to express themselves authentically. These findings underscore the importance of organisational support structures such as mentorship, training, and leadership modelling to help early-career professionals navigate this transition.

The implications of this research extend to both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature by examining these constructs in the understudied context of India's private sector, where unique cultural and organisational dynamics result in novel outcomes. The findings also refine existing theories, such as the Conservation of Resources Theory, by positioning psychological safety as a resource that buffers against the stress of agility demands, while resilience enables employees to thrive amid change. Additionally, the study highlights the need for future research to explore these relationships

longitudinally and across diverse cultural contexts to better understand how they evolve over time.

For practitioners, the results offer actionable insights for fostering a future-ready workforce. Human resource professionals and organisational leaders should prioritise interventions that simultaneously cultivate psychological safety, agility, and resilience, particularly for early-career employees. For example, onboarding programs could integrate training on adaptive skills alongside initiatives that promote open communication and trust. Leaders play a critical role in modelling vulnerability and rewarding both agility and authentic expression, thereby reducing the perceived tension between these constructs. Organisations might also consider creating peer support networks to help employees share challenges and strategies for balancing adaptability with psychological safety.

Ultimately, this study underscores that psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience are not isolated competencies but interrelated pillars of a thriving workplace. By recognising and addressing the tensions between them, organisations can create "future-ready" environments where individuals feel empowered to adapt, innovate, and recover from setbacks. As the workplace continues to evolve, understanding these dynamics and incorporating the necessary practices will be essential for building organisations that can stand the test of time and rise above challenges, throughout India, and beyond.

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Appendix

Note of informed consent:

"Hello, I am Sristi Ganguly, a final year postgraduate student pursuing MSc in Applied Psychology at Sister Nivedita University. I am conducting research on the relationship among perceived psychological safety, workforce agility, and employee resilience in the workplace among private sector employees in India. All the information you share will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only. If you wish to proceed, kindly click on the consent button below. Your contribution will take no longer than 10 minutes and will go a long way! Thank you."

Psychological Safety Scale:

1. If you make a mistake on this organisation, it is not held against you.
2. Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.

3. People in this organisation sometimes accept others for being different.
4. It is safe to take a risk in this organsiation.
5. It isn't difficult to ask other members of this organisation for help.
6. No one in this organisation would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
7. Working with members of this organisation, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilised.

Workforce Agility Measure:

WA-1 I am comfortable with change, new ideas, and new technologies in my organization.

WA-2 I am flexible to quickly change from task to task, job to job, and place to place.

WA-3 I map my skills, benchmark for skill assessment, and develop skills.

WA-4 I am comfortable with cross-functional project teams, collaborative ventures with other companies, or with a virtual organization.

WA-5 I am tech-savvy and have knowledge in advanced manufacturing technologies, IT skills, use of mobile technologies, etc.

WA-6 I quickly develop skills, adjust to new environments, and collect information.

WA-7 I take personal interest in collecting information about my organization and other related organizations.

Employee Resilience Scale:

1. I effectively collaborate with others to handle challenges at work
2. I successfully manage a high workload for long periods of time
3. I resolve crises competently at work

4. I learn from mistakes and improve the way I do my job
5. I re-evaluate my performance and continually improve the way I do my work
6. I effectively respond to feedback, even criticism
7. I seek assistance at work when I need specific resources
8. I approach managers when I need their support
9. I use change at work as an opportunity for growth